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SUBJECT: JUNE 24 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: SIX-PARTY TALKS, ZIMBABWE ELECTIONS, JAPANESE PORT CALL, TIBET

¶1. Key points at the June 24 MFA press briefing were:

-- The spokesman would not speculate on the timing of the North Korea nuclear declaration.

-- China is "concerned" about the situation in Zimbabwe and calls on all parties to carry out the Presidential election peacefully.

-- The spokesman did not know whether a Japanese naval ship had arrived in China as planned.

-- China is working hard to stabilize Tibet and allow journalists to visit.

North Korea Nuclear Declaration and Six-Party Talks

¶2. At the June 24, 2008 regular MFA press briefing, MFA Spokesman Liu Jianchao refused to provide an answer to repeated questions about the timing of the North Korean nuclear declaration, but said that the parties should carry out agreements in a "comprehensive and balanced manner." Liu said that all parties are holding consultations to decide how to proceed with the talks and that China hopes these consultations will "produce results." Asked whether North Korea would allow verification of its nuclear declaration, Liu said parties are holding consultations to solve this very important issue. Asked why North Korea has taken so long to deliver its declaration, Liu said that the Six-Party Talks are "complicated" and "take time." All parties are making efforts to implement the remainder of the second phase and stepping up consultations, said Liu.

Zimbabwe Elections and Arms Shipment

¶3. Asked whether China still supports the holding of elections in Zimbabwe, Liu said that China is "concerned" about the situation in Zimbabwe and hopes that relevant parties complete the Presidential election smoothly through dialogue and peaceful means. In response to a question about the Chinese arms shipment to Zimbabwe, Liu said that there were many rumors but that the Chinese ship containing the arms, the An Yue Jiang, had already returned to China.

Japanese Port Call

¶4. Liu could not confirm that the Japanese warship that was scheduled to arrive in China today had actually arrived. The ship's visit will promote exchanges between Japan and China and deliver earthquake relief for Sichuan, said Liu. Liu said that he did not think the visit would provoke public anger.

Mt. Everest Access, Foreign Journalists in Tibet

¶5. Liu had not seen the reported comments of a government official from Tibet who said that China would limit access to Mr. Everest for environmental reasons. Asked when foreign journalists would be allowed into Tibet, Liu said China is working hard to stabilize the region and will work to make the visits happen at an early date.

Huang Qi Arrest

¶6. Liu said he was not familiar with the case of human rights activist Huang Qi but said that Chinese people enjoy freedom of expression and that no one would be punished for expressing himself. Liu said that the case would be dealt with in accordance with the law.

RANDT